UNITY

FREEDOM, FELLOWSHIP AND CHARACTER IN RELIGION

LYNCHING

The current wave of lynchings, including the indescribable horror in Georgia, is a shame which all America shares and which cannot be excused by States' rights and local autonomy. Lynching must be stopped in the United States or American democracy will be found impotent and incapable of survival. Local authorities cannot or will not cope with this problem. A Federal anti-lynching act with teeth in it is, therefore, obviously called for. Failing this, America will be increasingly embarrassed and hampered in its role as leader and protector of the forces of world democracy. It is the plain duty of the President to demand, and of the Congress to take, the legal steps that will make participation by citizens in a lynching, and connivance therein by officials, a Federal crime with severe penalties attached. The old proposals for assessing fines on counties where lynchings occur is not enough. The individuals involved must be held personally responsible as criminals and dealt with accordingly. The stench of lynching has floated into Nuremberg, Paris, and Tokyo, and embarrassed Justice Jackson, James Byrnes, General MacArthur, and all who represent American democracy abroad. We can no longer afford to allow the Bilbos, the Talmadges, and their ilk to set the moral tone of our country. Lynching can and must be stopped by the strong arm of Federal law.

Curtis W. Reese.

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The Field

"The world is my country, to do good is my Religion."

Principles of the Women's International League, Adopted May, 1946

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom was founded in 1915 in the midst of the First World War. Jane Addams became its first International President and held this office until her death. Throughout its history it has maintained a policy and a program consistent with the ideas of its founders.

The League is both an international and an interracial organization. Its aim is to work for the establishment of those political, economic, and psychological conditions, both abroad and at home, which can assure peace and freedom.

The League holds that peace is more than the absence of war or the maintenance of order through coercive power. It asserts that peace is a positive principle in human affairs—a method as well as a goal.

To the Women's International League, liberty of the human spirit is a basic value. The League maintains that this conviction has been the central impulsion in man's long struggle for freedom. The history of civilization has been the history of liberty: freedom of thought, freedom of religion, freedom of persons, freedom of enterprise, freedom of labor, freedom of research—all have been stepping stones in the spiritual advance of mankind.

Obstructing creative processes in our contemporary world are the military system, economic and political imperialism, all forms of dictatorship and exploitation, all suppression of civil liberties, all discrimination based on sex, class, race, creed, or opinion.

The League maintains that a free society must be based on the individual's acceptance of responsibility. Since no individual can live to himself alone, that responsibility requires the community to impose upon itself certain controls for the common good. The League contends that these controls should be subject to democratic processes and reviews.

The League believes that injustice, deep-seated in the political and economic structure of our society, has been largely responsible for world-wide war. Peace and freedom depend on the development of a free and democratic social order in which the basic needs of the people are met and their fundamental rights preserved.

The League affirms that peace and freedom are interdependent and that they must rest on law and justice. The primary function of democratic government is to translate these principles into a political and economic program that will give them substance and meaning. Such a program is not static but dynamic. It must provide for growth and expansion, for new forms, new areas of development, new institutions to meet the demands of contemporary life.

—*Four Lights.*

UNITY

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The Social Dynamics of Liberal Religion

CARL A. STORM

The long pilgrimage of man upon earth is one of continuous striving and seeking. Not only has man been conditioned by evironmental factors but he has sought to bring about purposeful and socially beneficial change. He has merged and channelized his energies in the social process in line with what he has conceived to be worth-while values. But even when these values have been attained, there has never been found a final resting place. At best it has been a moving equilibrium. For each stage has had implicit within it the factors of further change. Geographical, biological, technological, and cultural factors and the incessant drive of human energies have invariably broken up every new form of social organization. New issues have emerged as the desires of men have expanded and their vision has widened; the existing equilibrium no longer has sufficed, and with the sloughing off of aspects of the old there has been a pouring of human energies into the creation of new forms of order.

The speed of this process has not been regular. Some of the periods of social equilibrium have lasted longer than others. The direction of the change has not always been in line with man's most worth-while desires. Some of the attempts at purposeful change have backfired and led off in unexpected directions. There has always been a tension and oftentimes a struggle between those who would hold to some past equilibrium with its real or imagined stability and those who would move on to new positions. But through it all runs the dynamic flow of social life, a flow which in our day has reached a new high of velocity.

Men, in their religious orientation, have had to relate themselves in one way or another to the condition of endless flux and change. At one polar extreme has been a sense of complete pessimism about the whole affair. This approach perhaps reached its fullest expression in Hinduism and, with some qualification, in Buddhism. The world was a kind of magic garden, existent but not quite real. Everything had its place in the eternal round of things and any attempt at directing the world in new directions was a futile undertaking. Evil was not something to be overcome within the context of the world itself. The important thing was the individual soul, caught up in the endless round of transmigration and the problem was how could it escape the cycle of lives and find apathy in Nirvana. The answer was found in a renunciation of all desire and a turning away from the very things that from a worldly point of view are usually considered most ethical and worth-while. Since the supreme evil was that of being bound up in a world of transitory things and desires, the way out was not that of combatting the evils of the world as such and supporting socially beneficial ends, but rather that of renouncing the world with its good as well as its evil. Nirvana was to be achieved by the path of mysticism, with its components of meditation, quietism, and contemplation. It was a path that led away from worldly interests by ignoring them and putting them out of mind. Its asceticism was, in the terminology of Max Weber, "an other-worldly asceticism" rather than the "worldly asceticism" of Christianity which Buddhism repudiated because it led to activism, to active resistance against and control of worldly interests.

Whatever may be said in favor of certain ethical by-products of Buddhism, certainly Hinduism has served as a deterrent in the rooting out of ignorance and superstition, and the practical effect of its indifference to the affairs of the world has been a strengthening and buttressing of a social structure that has meant misery, poverty, and death for vast portions of the population.

With Christianity, the orientation has been quite different. While the emphasis on the salvation of the individual soul has been central in orthodox Christian thought, the technique of mysticism for its attainment has been, in the main, frowned upon. Salvation, in Catholicism, was to be found through the channel of revealed truth held by the church. St. Theresa and other mystics were bitterly opposed for a long time because their claim to intuitive knowledge of reality represented a potential threat to the power of the church and its monopoly on revealed truth. If anyone was free to claim possession of truth known only to himself and by himself, the Church, as the final authority in religious matters, was made unnecessary. Thus, from the point of view of church organization alone, mysticism (as also monasticism) was something that had to be kept under strict control.

But more than that, while Catholicism has never made the relation between individual salvation and worldly activity too close, it has never viewed the affairs of the world as something to be ignored. Salvation might be dependent upon faith but the duty of man was not to retire from the things of the world but rather to actively participate in its occupational and social context. For that context, Catholicism has always believed that it had the final authoritative moral pattern and structural organization, and to that end it has bent every effort to bring the secular world under the control of Mother Church. As far as possible it has sought and still seeks to freeze the dynamics of social life in a rigid framework.

Strangely enough, Lutheranism, which played an active role in the break with Catholicism and lent support thereby to the forces that were pushing through

the restrictions of feudalism and the sanctions given to feudalism by Catholicism, later abandoned the idea of social control. It developed an essentially pessimistic, and fatalistic view about the world and human life. The world was sinful and it was a hopeless task to attempt its reformation. The matter of inner salvation through faith and grace was the important thing. In the matter of secular affairs authority was needed to keep the world from slipping into worse chaos, so Lutheranism enjoined respect for the secular authority of the State, trusting that it would be Christian but not particularly concerned about seeing that it was Christian. The State must be obeyed even when its requirements were in opposition to Christian ethics. This bifurcation of outlook has been the major weakness of Lutheranism, most apparent in recent years in Germany but no less prevalent in America.

With Calvinism, however, there was no running away from the world. The old quip that there is nothing more dangerous than a Calvinist just up from his knees in prayer is historically sound. In strict Calvinist logic the salvation or damnation of the individual was not in the slightest degree determined by his worldly behavior, these having been determined by God once and for all from the beginning of time. But still the Calvinist was not free from social responsibility. He was placed in the world, as Weber reminds us, with a particular "calling," and his task was not to flee from or to ignore the world but to overcome it in the name of a religious ideal. A transcendental and all-powerful God was the backdrop against which the Calvinist worked in his active orientation to the world. This was a continuation of the monastic tradition with its worldly asceticism, conquering and remaking the world as a duty to God. The production of wealth and power was theoretically secondary to the exercise of one's calling and the things of the world were not to be sought and displayed and squandered as ends in themselves.

In sanctioning man's outpouring of energy, particularly in the field of developing capitalism, and to a large extent acting as a controlling force over their manifestation, Calvinism was one of the important factors that added to the stream of modern life. It was not its intention, as evidenced by the theocratic state, to add to the impetus of these forces as we now know them, but unwittingly that was the end result of its active orientation to the world. When in time the forces of capitalism broke loose from the narrow limitations and authoritarian controls of Calvinism and found their own power and sanction, they rather quickly dumped religion and placed economics in the saddle.

Liberalism in religion has sought to relate itself to the dynamic flow of life without being caught in the web of pessimism or being snared in the cul-de-sac of absolutism and fixed finality. Without being oblivious to the values that may be derived from contemplation and quietism and meditation, it has taken a position quite at variance with mysticism, whether it be that of ancient India, of the Christian mystics, or of Aldous Huxley in our own time. Its opposition to mysticism stems from its central principle that reason is the final authority for truth. The kind of knowledge that the mystic claims for himself is untestable, beyond sense perception and intellectual inference. It is private knowledge which may prove to be valid knowledge, but until it can be subjected to experimental and logical test, it leaves the door open to all kinds of fanatical and irrational convictions and is potentially both dangerous and misleading.

But more than that, when Huxley, for example, in *The Perennial Philosophy,* makes the very existence of personality the basic evil in the world and urges the necessity of annihilating the self with all its appetites, feelings, will, reasoning powers, and consciousness, the result is a negativism and pessimism that is absolute and complete. One wonders, as W. E. Garrison has pointed out, why God (since Huxley so strongly believes in God) ever started the process which eventuated in the development of mind and consciousness if it was foredoomed to failure and was to constitute the supreme evil. That would appear to have been "God's greatest mistake." Certainly it runs counter to the best ethical thought which has emphasized the enrichment of the life of man, and which has found the answer to life not in annihilation of the self, but in the enrichment of the self through active participation in creative, purposeful activity.

Religious liberalism continues to find itself in opposition to religious orthodoxy not only because the tenets of orthodoxy are open to question but more fundamentally because orthodoxy assumes that while everything else may change, the truths of religion do not change. Liberalism finds no historical evidence to support the assumption that religion is alone exempt from the process of change, or that religious and moral truth are outside time and the enlarged experience of man. Liberals in religion have had to move beyond the position of a Servetus, a Channing, an Emerson, and a Parker, and they view with suspicion those who claim that they are not subject to similar necessity. A prescientific and insular religion claiming unchangeable truth must be viewed as an anachronism and a cultural lag and a vague answer in a day when enlarged knowledge is so desperately needed and when the scientific method places in our hands a most fruitful implement for the discovery and control not only of the secrets of physical nature but those of human nature as well. This is apparent when the authoritarians and absolutists in religion would have us turn our back on the centuries of intellectual development and take as our model the Middle Ages with its assumed unity and harmony and peace. They would have us turn our gaze toward what Arthur Koestler has so aptly termed the "medieval twilight," a twilight which is imagined to be the noonday sun. Or could a more complete renunciation of the modern spirit be found than the "existential thinking" of the Kierkegaardians, in which man "must strangle his intellect in order to believe," in which "truth is won by a decision and not by reasoning"! Here is a tossing overboard, with a vengeance, of the mind and the scientific method and all that they imply. It becomes part of the current widespread reaction against science, against science which all too often is equated with atomic bombs and other death-dealing devices. Science, the new scapegoat, is blamed for all our woes, despite the fact that the human race had plenty of woes when it had very little science. Faith in God as the Unchangeable Being is advanced as the great need and the only solution to our problems, despite the fact that in the greatest periods of religious faith there were plenty of wars and a full measure of injustice and cruelty and misery.

This, from the point of view of liberalism, is not faith but a continuation of "the failure of nerve," a loss of faith in the ability of man to solve his prob-

lems. A faith that "laughs at logic," as does neo-orthodoxy, is an escape from the difficulties of thought and the effort of scientific research and the admittedly tremendous problems that we face in directing change in a socially beneficial and purposeful direction. It is in terms of depth-psychology, a return to the womb of Mother Church, what Cyril Connelly has spoken of as "seeking a womb with a view," a yearning for a "maternal substitute for the vigour and audacity of constructive thought." This "falling back on all that is primitive and infantile is" as Connelly sums it up "an act of cowardice to the God in Man."

Religious liberalism, whatever its weaknesses and inadequacies, refuses to play the coward. Not only does it accept life as process, as movement and change in everything including religious thought and expression, but it believes that man and only man can and must control and direct that change toward ethical goals. If liberals were ever so naive as to believe that all man had to do was to sit still while the elevator of cosmic progress carried him to a state of utopian perfection, they must now realize that that idea is one of the dated things in the history of human thought. Today we would second the conclusion of Alexander Goldenwiser that "if there is social evolution . . . it is no longer accepted as a process to be contemplated, but as a task to be achieved by deliberate and concerted human effort." But if the record of liberalism means anything it would seem to indicate that we have not been tainted with so easy an optimism as we are often accused of holding. The figures that we rightfully claim as part of our tradition and the leaders that set the tone of our movement are precisely those who have insisted that social evolution was a "task to be achieved by deliberate and concerted human effort." Dorothea Dix, Theodore Parker, Horace Mann, and innumerable others labored in many causes. The going was tough and they knew it was tough, but they well realized that the job would only be done through human effort and striving and not through some automatic process or through the grace of God.

If the religious liberal ever falls under the spell of the early position of Herbert Spencer, that the end of social dynamics was the perfect static state, a Utopia of perfect lasting adjustment between individuals and between societies, or what in religious terminology is referred to as the Kingdom of God on Earth, that is but one other position that must be dropped. For as far as we can see there is no far-off divine or human attainment of values at which point human striving will cease. The logic implicit in social dynamics is to ever strive after new values, values which are in themselves dynamic, and to bring about an integration of these values in new forms of order which themselves are subject to further change. The values of full employment and of democratic collectivism, for example, are relatively new values which man has projected ahead of himself. They command his loyalty not because any claim can be made that they are pre-existent, absolute truths to which we should conform, but because they have been pressed upon us by human experience and need. They will have to be hammered out on the anvil of human struggle. Their attainment, however, will no more mean the cessation of the creation of new values calling for new forms of order than did the attainment of the eight hour day or of pure food legislation mean that we had reached the end of our striving. Rupert B. Vance reminds us that "a static system of norms and values" cannot be accommodated "to the idea of a dynamic social order" and quotes the words of the historian, Carl Becker: ". . . the idea of progress was always at war with its premises. It rests upon the notion of a universe in perpetual flux; yet it carries the implication of finality, for progress seems to be meaningless unless there is movement toward some ultimate objective. But we can picture history as a process making toward an ultimate goal, only if the world is to come to an end when that goal is attained."

The imperative of dealing with such issues as prejudice, poverty, starvation, and war is one that is felt by many groups other than religious liberals. A recent issue of the Congregational magazine *Social Action,* for example, quotes Pope Pius XI for the Catholics: "It is our right and duty to deal authoritatively with social and economic matters." And for the Protestants it quotes from a recent book, *The Faith of a Protestant,* by W. Burnet Easton, Jr.:

> What then is the Christian motivation for social action? To answer the question we must go back again to the major Christian premise: the fact of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. This means that the most important task that you and I have is to make ourselves acceptable unto God. We make ourselves acceptable unto God by trying to do His will as revealed to us in Jesus Christ—by trying to apply the law of love in every area of life. But the motive . . . is not that the areas of life will gradually become better. . . Rather the motive is to fulfill the demands of God.

It is quite possible that considerable constructive social action may (and actually does) flow from such motivation, but it is a dangerous point of view when the making of areas of life better is not in itself considered a sufficient motivation and a matter of prime importance. "Doing the will of God as revealed in Jesus Christ" is in itself not a plan of action but rather an expression of the continuance in our day of "a legalistic and moralistic viewpoint anchored in theology." At many points in the modern world, this viewpoint exists as a most serious obstacle to the full and effective use of a scientific and ethical approach to the problems that confront man. It represents the gulf that still exists between a supernaturalistic and a naturalistic view of man and his social relations. And as long as the source and nature of morality is attributed to supernatural authority, as long as the motivation for social action is taken out of the context of human needs, as long as the specific social and political and economic issues of our time are made secondary to doing the will of God and any improvement in certain areas of life is viewed as merely good fortune—as long as all this continues we will be living in a land of soothsayers rather than in a world of social scientists.

What makes liberalism so difficult a faith to hold is the fact that it has no absolutes and no final resting place. It cannot freeze the flow of life and therefore it must be an attitude of continuously critical and evaluative judgment rather than a set of dogmas or a single eternal plan. It must find the values of life in the life process itself, not in some realm outside. It must constantly weigh possible alternatives in terms of ethical insight coupled with scientific knowledge. It must be flexible, experimental, willing to correct its beliefs in action. It must be on a continuous voyage of moral discovery, dropping values and programs which have outlived their usefulness, and projecting new values and finding the most effective means for their implementation.

This is no easy task, and many falter before it, turning to ancient and more easily accessible gods. But it

is the task that has to be fulfilled if the happiness and dignity of mankind is to be broadened and advanced. It is a task that calls for all the resources at man's command. For we are now in a period of history in which the potentialities of new sources of power make possible a tremendous advance in many areas of life but may mean the destruction of much that we have sorely gained. There is no guaranty that modern man will escape such destruction; there is in fact considerable possibility that we will not advance fast enough and far enough. But with the knowledge that is at hand, with the extension of the scientific spirit into wider and wider areas of life, and with the imperative demands that immediately weigh upon us, it is possible to formulate short- and long-range goals toward which men can "deliberately choose to move." It would most certainly be an ignoble lowering of the standard of liberalism if we should wilt before the problems that confront us and lose our faith in the possibility of the continuous reformation of society. The obligation of liberalism, both in its verbal and practical expression, has always been to set the tone of "tenacity in the face of adversity." That more than ever is its obligation today.

William Morris

F. H. AMPHLETT MICKLEWRIGHT

It is just fifty years since William Morris died in October, 1896. At the time of his death, the first interest of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood had faded and Morris himself had antagonized many of his more respectable contemporaries by his strong socialistic views and by the active part which he took in spreading them. Victorian society in England did not know what to make of an artist who wore a blue serge suit with colored collar and tie on all occasions and who spoke at Socialist meetings on the street corner even if he was also an Honorary Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford. But the intervening years have seen the rise of a strong social democracy which has come to seek a widely democratic culture. Much that Morris said has passed into the sphere of practical politics. Among Socialists, there has been a reaction against Socialism as a narrowly doctrinaire creed in economics and it has become a search for a wider viewpoint. In many ways, Morris has come into his own and is a figure relevant to the needs of a post-war generation.

Born at Walthamstow, London, in 1834, William Morris came of a well-to-do family and it was natural that he should go to so famous a public school as Marlborough. But games and the usual school curriculum failed to appeal to him; his interests lay in the revival of Gothic art, in ecclesiastical architecture and old church music. He was a high churchman, and when he went on to Exeter College, Oxford, it seemed destined that he would become a clergyman and a high church leader. But, with his college friend, Burne Jones, he took to exploring the new Pre-Raphaelite movement in art. His antiquarian tastes remained, although now poetry and painting took the place of his former high church interests. He joined the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood who were seeking to recapture the mundane stresses of the early Middle Ages in painting and literature.

After he had taken his degree, Morris moved down to London and spent some time in the circle which clustered around Rossetti. He experimented in various arts and started to write the poems which were later to be famous. Morris had no limits to the range of his interests. *The Earthly Paradise* and *The Life and Death of Jason,* two of his greatest poems, were worked out in germ during those years. He also painted and took as his subjects antiquarian models which he interpreted in a Pre-Raphaelite manner. Already he was concerned with the problem of art in life and he was busy designing furnishings and wallpapers which could be described as beautiful and which might bring a message of beauty to the person living in their presence. Antiquity thrilled him but he ranged far beyond the conventionalized antiquity of the college curriculum. At that time, the sagas of Scandinavia were scarcely known in England and had attracted little interest. Morris became a proficient Norse scholar, translated the sagas and rendered them into masterpieces of English literature, calling attention to the strength of their national cultural spirit. The Viking spirit of adventure seems to have possessed a special appeal to his own adventurous character.

As time went on, the lack of beauty in Victorian furnishings made a definite impression on Morris. He realized that there was the constant difficulty experienced by the ordinary purchaser when he wanted anything better than the hideous conventional types. Morris, with a few friends, set out to supply the demand. He founded the firm of Morris & Company which, in its later premises at Merton Abbey, did much to raise the standards of furnishings and to provide for beauty in common life.

Morris had evolved for himself a definite philosophy which demanded that beauty was a necessary part of the well-balanced life. It therefore followed logically that beauty should be within the range of every individual, that lack of beauty meant an ill-balanced life, and that the surroundings of the town should be set in beauty. For some years these views festered in Morris' mind and drove him in the direction of social democracy. But they made little headway against the narrowly industrial and commercial utilitarianism which had possessed the England of the period. In 1871 came the Paris Commune, and Morris was horrified at the brutality with which a working-class movement could be suppressed and with the petty bourgeois government which took its place. He wrote a fiery leaflet and followed it up by a series of bitter poems, *Pilgrims of Hope.* Morris was by now set to be a revolutionary but of a kind all his own.

The Eastern Question of 1877 and the clash between Gladstone and Disraeli brought such subjects once again to the fore in Morris' mind. He came to feel that definite political action was necessary if his view of life was to obtain so much as a hearing. For a few years, he experimented with liberalism of a radical tinge but felt that it did not go to the heart of the matter. Gradually, he threw in his lot with the small and despised band of English Socialists. By 1883, he had joined the Social Democratic Federation, led by H. M. Hyndman, was working for Socialism with Bernard Shaw, and

had written an *Address to Working Men* in which he urged them to rise up, to throw off the chains of exploitation, and to build up a democracy in which an abundant life should be possible.

But even in the Social Democratic Federation Morris was not comfortable. As a leader, Hyndman was preoccupied with the economics of Karl Marx and with economic theories in finance. Morris confessed on one occasion that he dutifully tried to read Marx's *Capital,* was thrilled by the history, and was completely befogged by the economic theory. He gathered a group of friends and founded the Socialist League. Morris bore his share of the hackwork, editing its paper, *Commonweal,* in which some of his best journalism appeared. He spoke at street corners and, on one occasion, he was arrested and fined for obstruction. In November, 1886, came the famous clash between police and unemployed in the Haymarket at which a workman, Linnell, was killed and Cunninghame Graham, then a Scottish M.P., was arrested side by side with John Burns, afterwards a Liberal cabinet minister. Morris had been present and, when Linnell was given a public funeral, he wrote the ode in his memory which was sold along the route taken by the procession.

During his later years Morris divided his time between his Hammersmith home, facing the river Thames, and Kelmscott Manor, Lechlade, Gloucestershire. In 1889, he had been angered to see the Socialist League captured by the anarchists and he withdrew with a few friends into the Hammersmith Socialist Society. Morris continued his work, writing, designing, and agitating. Late in life he made a thorough study of the art of dyeing in order to make more use of color variations in his designs. But he overworked himself badly and, in 1896, died at a comparatively early age. When his friend, Cumminghame Graham, in a delightful essay on his funeral, said that it would matter little to Morris whether he awoke to the sound of the Last Trump or to a shrill blast on Odin's horn, he had caught in a few words much of the spirit of the Humanist and the man.

Morris, although a consistent Humanist, certainly did not fit into any doctrinaire school. His incursions into social and political affairs tended to separate him from his old Pre-Raphaelite friends. But he was certainly not of any one set of Socialists. For Morris it was necessary that beauty should be a common element within life and that any society which made against beauty should be done away. At times he used the most blood-curdling revolutionary phrases but his idea of revolution was of one taking place through education. He had served on the London School Board at its inception in 1870 and he firmly believed that education was the only way to the revolution in life as a whole, which he saw as desirable. The Paris Commune and "Bloody Sunday" had taught Morris the folly of a minority fighting the majority and wasting both effort and life. When enough people had become educated, they would devise the methods necessary to bring about change. Morris had little faith in parliamentary action to this end and saw movements outside parliament towards educating the public taste as the most vital in the securing of the aims which he regarded as desirable. It was in the interest of this propaganda that he wrote two of the best-known of his books. *The Dream of John Ball* was the story of the rebel priest of 1381, and Morris pleaded for the simplified life which John Ball sought. *News from Nowhere* was a utopia in which Morris set out to picture the world as it might be if a philosophy of beauty prevailed in common life.

To his more conventional contemporaries, Morris was a dangerous and irresponsible dreamer. But the fifty years which have passed since his death have done much to vindicate his viewpoint. Recent movements in education, summed up in the Education Act of 1944, have sought to turn the schools toward the directions which Morris explored and to relate education to the whole art of living; beauty and craftsmanship have come to play a very considerable part in latter-day educational theory. Morris wrote on one occasion:

> I desire the town to be impregnated with the beauty of the country, and the country with the intelligence and the vivid life of the town. I want every homestead to be clean, orderly, and tidy; a lovely house surrounded by acres and acres of garden. On the other hand, I want the town to be clean, orderly, and tidy; in short a garden with beautiful houses in it.

In 1892, Morris' dream seemed remote and unpractical, something which cut across utilitarian and commercial theory. Fifty years after his death, it is closely akin to the common outlook of town-planners and reflects a great deal of the town-planning designed for the post-war period. Morris is not only returning to literary favor; his Humanist outlook upon living in its demand for a common beauty has been vindicated and accepted in contemporary life.

Scientific Experience in Religion

GEORGE LAWRENCE PARKER

Religious experience is a well-known and familiar term, especially within the Christian vocabulary,—let it be of the narrow definite sort as embodied in accepted dogma, or radical as when marked by sudden change or revelation, or progressive as when we advance step by step into fresher views.

In the roll call of all of these routes we know what we mean by religious experience. The map is recognized even by those who have not traveled by any of the signboards. The name of the Lord is taken in vain by countless people who do no more than accept the common report and rumor of God within the soul. As Job put it, these multitudes of people observe the outskirts of His ways but how small a whisper do they hear of Him! Still they possess an "aboutness of knowledge concerning Him" and use the ordinary vocabulary moderately well, although none too wisely.

There is a contrast to all of this when we, most of us, use the term scientific experience. There is no atmospheric pressure that welds scientific experience to our basic mind stuff. In our common practice we mean by scientific experience the product of laboratories. We mean the searching experimentation of a limited group of trained specialists who carry their conclusions and observations to the farthest edge of possibility, deductions based on the most perfect exclusion of error attainable. Scientific experience uses the trial and error system; human or, for use here, religious

experience uses the error and trial system. Science puts figures together and they become facts; religion puts facts together and we become figures. Each is right in its own field, of course. But after all it is persons who make science, while on the other hand it is religion that makes persons.

Before we speak of these "two fields," wrongly so-called, let me give it as my conviction that scientific experience, as above briefly defined, is a closed book to practically all of us except the scientists themselves. We adopt their results, of course, but their method is not a companion on our journey. Its waters do not splash over their own boundaries to make green our landscapes of inner personal living. These waters may and do affect our conscious ways of living but do not enter into our vital consciousness. They enlarge our view but do not change our point of view. Emerson must have felt this when he, reputedly, made his reply about the new telegraph that "would enable Texas to talk to Massachusetts." "Yes," he replied, "but has Texas anything to say to Massachusetts?" Without carrying his remark toward any invidious comparisons, we do have to ask: Can science ever say to mankind, "I am the bread of Life"? Can science ever say, "I lead you in green pastures and by still waters, I restore your soul"? The present 1946 response of science to that query does not appear hopeful.

But let it be noted that this failure of science to feed man's inner life is no belittlement of the scientific method. On the contrary, it is the glory of science that in its highest interpretations it has never made any such claim. Some few fitful fireflies have often lighted our boglands, declaring that they were veritable sunlight, but their assumption has not been recognized by the masters, from Galileo down to Einstein.

As for the "two fields," I must confess that for my part the trite remark that science and religion present no conflict because they move in different fields leaves me entirely cold, unconvinced, and dissatisfied. It seems to me to beg the question almost entirely. If I have within me two ever-active separate fields of life, worked by different forces and demanding separate allegiances, then I am in constant danger of becoming a split personality, a schizophrenic victim. I prefer to see a vast unity at work, of which I can say, as Paul said, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together until now, and we, having the first fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption or redemption of our body." In other words, the two fields, in Paul's majestic phrase, are forever working toward inescapable unity; the body and the soul, society and its ideals, man's fact and man's vision refuse to live in endless warfare. Jesus in many of his parables clearly enters the field of science and claims it as his own. When, for instance, he said, "Not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father's notice," he was not uttering a kindly bedtime story for our comfort. Rather was he announcing the law of gravitation eighteen hundred years before Newton in surprise discovered it; Newton made only one change, he substituted an apple for a sparrow.

Science and religion do not move in separate fields. The genuinely religious mind does not have to change its clothes or clean up before it sits down to supper in the Infinite Father's house. The genuinely religious mind knows full well that science and religion are working at the same job or else both jobs are delusions.

Humanity's famine is one famine, not two. The spiritual famine came first and produced the second. The initial soul-neglect through evil, through selfishness, through false economics, through the profit motive, and through war, brought about the physical collapse of this hour. We first broke or fragmented our souls on the whirling dynamo of worldly success, and now our bodies are broken by the flying wreckage of a world dynamo too weak to accept the burden we placed on it. However we phrase it, however we turn the matter, it presents itself as a unified and complete circle.

Avoiding the pitfall of too many theological implications, it nevertheless seems plain that when Jesus combined the feeding of the hungry with the feeding of the soul he illustrated the essential unity between science and religion; he saw body and soul tied together in an unbreakable oneness. The plain emphasis that he placed on this indivisible creature, a living person, this piercing depth of his imagination and vision, is unique. No world teacher has ever simplified, dignified, and glorified our double nature, or so filled us with hope about ourselves as he did.

It is because of this insight that he has such supremacy over us. His singularity of position may indeed have a basis which some call theological. But it is far more historical and objective. He actually accomplished a certain thing and by that accomplishment gained his right of eminent domain. Accomplishment is the wrong term, used here only for the sake of definiteness. What he really did was to set mankind on the pathway of an endless process of self-integration, a never-finished laboratory process in the creation of personality. This sort of developing process brings us very close to the central idea of science, and certainly it is the central idea of religion. He saw man not as split into compartments but as a solid core of reality. He saw man as one, because he saw God as One. Man may fail, and does fail, in his achievement of unity; but in Jesus' point of view man cannot reject the thought that we are candidates for that achievement. It haunts us day and night, a unifying purpose and love "that will not let us go" nor let go of us. As children of the Undivided God our charter of existence is the same kind of undividedness.

He put the whole matter in one of his simplest yet most misunderstood parables. "The Kingdom of Heaven [the Kingdom of unity with self and the universe]," he said, "is like a treasure hid in a field, which when a man found it he sold all that he had and bought that field." The merchant did not buy the treasure but the whole field, bad land, good land, meadows, and rocks; he purchased the whole property. What he really bought was an agricultural opportunity. As our old farmers used to say he saw "possibilities in this old abandoned farm," thought he could "redeem the place." In Jesus' view, the Kingdom of Heaven is not a pot of gold, not buried treasure of creed or dogma, not a Fort Knox of buried wealth. The Kingdom of Heaven is the chance to "bring back" or redeem our property that is going to waste because of scattered, unscientific farming methods. As the Infinite Agriculturist, God buys up our possibilities, invests Himself in us in the genuine hope of making out of us a valid and paying investment. The whole process is as scientific as it is religious. "The treasure in the field" is nothing more nor less than our chance to become so unified and integrated that we progress to the solid value of pure gold.

Jesus may not have been the only seer who ever caught this vision. But he appears to be the only one who made man's entire oneness so plain that the simplest soul can understand it and live it. "A house divided against itself cannot stand" is the motto over his laboratory. In the God-pattern all is unity and must reflect itself in man and in society. God's will for us is not fission but vision. So long as we keep religion inside our experience but exclude science from our experience, just so long will we be a schizophrenic fragmentary world full of fragmentary persons. We shall never come to our unity as Sons of God. Wholeness is holiness, as Gen. Jan Christiaan Smuts pointed out years ago in his marvelous book, *Holism and Evolution.*

Our conflict between science and religion is largely due to the fact that we place religion within the field of experience but leave science out on the periphery of our being. We are quite sure (and for the most part rightly sure) that religion is a reality that operates in the very central part of us, but that, in general, science is nothing but a servant in our house, a wonder, a miracle, a convenience, a surprising addition to our housekeeping but without any personal or family rights. The truth is that our whole mental outlook would have long ago been made into a larger unity had we truly invited science into full membership, and made it an equal sharer and full cooperator in building the Kingdom of God within us, the Father's House undivided and unbroken.

The total background of experience is the only valid testing ground for both religion and science. Like all thought, like all emotion, like all philosophy, and equally like all common action, the imponderables of faith and knowledge are "not done when they are done." They fold themselves back for final interpretation into the measureless valleys and hinterlands of our consciousness. It is in that limitless country that all things seek their home and their ratification; there they come for final judgment. Into this land of experience—call it sense of life, consciousness, or what we will—religion and science must both come, or else the far provinces of our life will be fruitless arid wastes.

By the pragmatic test both science and religion "work," that is they do their jobs successfully. But the pressing question is: Do they work together in our one single field of experience? Are we plowing our field with a two-horse team, one of whom always pulls right and one always left? After science and religion have both won the encomium, "Well done, good and faithful servant," what does the whole field say of their work? Was it a majestic togetherness or was it a destructive separateness? The total field alone can render any valid verdict; for, after all, the Kingdom of Heaven is nothing more nor less than the harmonized agreement of all our parts joined in active cooperation.

It has been the experience of many of us to veritably progress from kerosene lamps to all the wonders of electricity, radio, radar, television, and nuclear energy. And yet not one of these has essentially changed the core of our innermost being. We are, in the main, just what we were when we gave our first tug at the endless chain of personality. We have not been changed in the twinkling of an eye. Science has not succeeded in making a new creation out of our original selfhood.

If we are ever going to be "new creatures in Christ Jesus" as Paul dared to phrase it, this foreign-immigration aspect of science must be completely changed. Science must become a naturalized citizen, and then a native son, and then a real agent in our spiritual field as well as in our material field. A new wholeness or holiness must overthrow all our suicidal oppositions, personal, political, industrial, and national, "thus making one out of two." This creation of unity seems to me to lie at the root of everything that Jesus said. This was his genius, and his goal was that every man should approximate to exactly that same kind of genius. When we catch his meaning we shall know that all real science is a living part of infinity. And likewise we shall find no difficulty in incorporating science into our spiritual existence until it becomes part, an essential part, of our religion.

With a new sense of the unity between our outward and our inward being, we shall know what wholeness is. And if St. John is correct, "we shall be like God, for we shall see Him as He is."

Edwin Arlington Robinson

LEONARD B. GRAY

No poet ever gave himself to his art more seriously and devotedly than Edwin Arlington Robinson. For love of writing poetry and single-mindedness he was unique. Most major poets have several strong interests and excel at more than one task. Walt Whitman was carpenter, schoolteacher, printer, newspaper editor, and political speaker. Amy Lowell was poet and critic. Robert Frost successfully farms, teaches, and lectures, and he is an excellent reader of his own poetry in public. Carl Sandburg loves to sing, to play his guitar, and to read his poetry in public. His great biography of Lincoln is perhaps more famous than his poetry. But Robinson, besides the few necessary ways of earning a living, such as working in a dry goods store in Boston, acting as a timekeeper in a New York subway, and serving as a special agent to the United States treasury department—jobs he never liked—did nothing but write poetry, and, as he strongly asserted several times, never cared to do anything else. No poet ever lifted before himself higher ideals for his work nor stuck more tenaciously to his ideals than he. No one hungered more for recognition and fame, nor strove harder to realize his ambitions than he. Yet he would not write a second-rate line or diverge an inch from his own sense of direction to win praise and popularity. With Robinson Jeffers we admire this poet more for his high ideals, his integrity, and his singleness of purpose than for his great poetry. Robinson was a greater man than he was a poet.

E. A. Robinson appeared just when American poetry needed him the most. It was a dead age in poetry-writing. The soil was hard, barren, fruitless. No fresh streams were bursting from it. No living voices were speaking. A new day was dawning and there were no

poems representative of it. Poets were imitating poets of the past. Their writing was artificial and pompous. Their voices were feeble and effeminate in a stirring dawn that demanded a vigorous, adult male verse. Yes, indeed, in a great time it was a lifeless time in poetry and, what was more, Robinson knew it. In an early sonnet he lifted a strong cry against the mechanical and soulless poems of his day. This pioneer of the renaissance decided to do something about it. And so with a serious sense of mission upon him he dedicated himself to his task as wholeheartedly as any minister of religion or social reformer or research scientist ever gave himself to his peculiar work.

Perhaps a number of other poets saw this same need of a vital and representative note in our poetry and were motivated with this same serious sense of mission. Anyway, several others, notably Robert Frost and Carl Sandburg, began writing fresh, original, authentic poems. These great three chiefly brought about in the second decade of this century a renaissance in American poetry truly as startling and wonderful as that brought about in American literature by Emerson, Thoreau, Melville, Whitman, and Hawthorne in the early second half of the nineteenth century.

Robinson differed from his two great contemporaries, especially from Sandburg, in that his form was not new. In fact, he stuck chiefly to classic and traditional forms. He became new in an old way. In subject matter, in keen penetration into human motives, and in ability to interpret human behavior he was strikingly new.

There is no telling where a poet may appear. And so any place is a good place for him to start life. But I think that the small village of Head Tide, Maine, where Robinson was born, and the nearby town of Gardiner to which his parents moved when he was hardly a year old, were particularly good places. In a small community one sees individuals and types close up and frequently. They become more vividly etched on the impressionable mind of a boy than they do in the city. The bleak air of seventeenth century Puritanism still hung about Gardiner. The town was haunted by a sense of departed glory. Gone were the great shipbuilding and seafaring days. Gone or poor were the great builders and captains, decaying and dilapidating their great houses. This disintegrating life compared to the glory that once was Gardiner's made a somber impression upon the sensitive and brooding boy. It was to form the pattern of his mind to no small degree and to appear in his poetry.

This son of a prosperous merchant saw merchants and bankers successful in the eyes of the townspeople. But is worldly success a criterion of true success? Is our standardized measurement of success the only one? Did the distorted and wrecked lives that stand out so noticeably in a small town deserve the strong hand of respectable convention so severely against them? And should there not be more understanding and tolerance towards people thwarted and shut up within themselves by eccentricity or loneliness or defeatism? Serious questions for the boy! Early he questioned the values and attitudes of smug small-towners. To him some people seem to be successful failures. Not a few victims of uncontrollable circumstances had fine abilities. Because of temperamental kinks or some other personal handicaps others had made futile attempts for success or virtuous living. Some like "Captain Craig" were noble and heroic, wise and lovable. As for the rich bankers, on the other hand, there seemed to be a lot that they were not getting out of life. The observing and questioning boy was gathering the material and developing the type of mind that were to make him the poet of society's misfits and wrecks.

Young Robinson was like other boys in that he played games and swam in the river, but different from them in that he walked alone by the river a great deal, saw much that most people missed, and was greatly puzzled by what he could not understand. This lonely boy had few intimates, but he found much understanding and friendship in his frequent visits to the home of Laura E. Richards, the well-known writer and daughter of Julia Ward Howe. Every spare moment he could snatch was spent in wide reading, especially in the Bible and in Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Emerson, and Whitman, who were to remain his favorites throughout his life.

Always the world around him became increasingly mysterious to the young poet who had begun to write at the age of eleven. The youth was a lover of nature, impressed and haunted by the wonders of the natural world, but not to the intensity that the young Wordsworth was. His imaginative and searching mind was lured chiefly by the mysterious world that lay within the minds and hearts of people. This inner world of motives and passions, of secret yearnings and aspirations, of twists and kinks, of guilt and remorse, of nobility and idealism, he would plumb to the depths. And so in "Tilbury Town" this dreamy, detached boy—whose future his mother worried about—acquired the habit of studying people, developed the somber cast of mind, and began to get the penetrating insight into human motives that were to make him a great biographer of souls and a psychological portrait painter. Before he left Gardiner for Harvard, the muse had laid its strong hands upon him. Already he knew deep within himself that if he could write something that would endure long after he was gone, he would be satisfied with an attic and a crust for the rest of his earthly life.

The young poet did not like Harvard and left after two years, disappointed that his poetry had received no recognition, but thankful that the university had given him an opportunity to read widely on his own and to think deeply. Few knew him. But his small inner circle admired and loved him. As they sat up late at night discussing life and literature, "E. A.," as his friends called him, would seldom utter a word but sat with intent listening and with dark, brooding eyes. Even his intimates knew only small segments of his inner life that he revealed by an occasional remark. Yet some of them considered him a genius and predicted that some day he would find himself and write great things.

The dwindling fortunes of his family called the young man back to Gardiner a few times, but never again could he be content with the petty town. "The Town Down the River" called him like a siren song. He loved New York even though it almost broke his spirit. Those early years there! How hard they were for the struggling poet! Eating at cheap restaurants! Hungry much of the time! In a barren room writing poems that editors sent back with indignant requests not to send any more! Hatred for his job, sympathy for the oppressed poor, indignant eyes at the callous rich, as he worked for a time as a timekeeper for a gang of laborers in a subway! Many dejected and bitter mo-

ments! What heavy weights of failure and defeatism! What frustration! Yet now and then he managed to save a few pennies for the theatre he loved. The exciting breathlessness before the curtain rises! Flesh and blood beyond the footlights bringing words to life! High enthusiasm for the operas of Gilbert and Sullivan! These were tonics and pleasant retreats from discordant actualities!

And then after several discouraging years other lights shot into his darkness. Kermit, the fourteen-year-old son of Theodore Roosevelt, ran across his poems at Groton. The boy gave the poems to his father. The sudden appreciation from the great President, the article about his work that Roosevelt and Roosevelt's young son wrote for *The Outlook,* and the job that the White House occupant secured for him in the Treasury Department came just in time for the despairing poet. To be sure, there is a difference of opinion as to just how much Roosevelt did for Robinson. The critics, we know, bore down all the harder on the poet. They unmercifully lashed the President, accusing him of getting out of his role and of using his position and name to get recognition for what they considered minor poetry. But I strongly suspect that the presidential influence meant the turning point in the career of the dejected poet. It lifted his morale. And it got his work into a few major magazines.

But nothing in all the world meant so much friendship, refreshment, inspiration, and calm seclusion for Robinson as his halcyon summers at the MacDowell Colony at Peterborough, New Hampshire. There under Mount Monadnock he did much of his best work. There the familiar figure quietly dressed in dark clothes, carrying his constant cane, with a slight stoop, gradually came to be regarded as the first citizen. One young artist told me that it was utterly impossible for Robinson to do anything for mere effect and that this unobtrusive man was greatly loved and honored at the Colony.

The second and third decades of this century that brought rich flowering in our poetry saw Robinson's fame blossoming fast. Reviewers were hard put to find adequate sentences to express their praise. A prominent book club adopted *Tristram* as its "book-of-the-month" and this poem sold faster than many "best selling" novels. Yale and Bowdoin gave the poet honorary degrees. Barnard College students named him their favorite poet. He received the award of the Author's Club of New York. A gold medal was awarded him by the National Institute of Arts and Letters. Three times the Pulitzer Prize came to him.

In fact, all along the hard way there were little, shining incidents that must have stirred deep wells of satisfaction in the heart of the struggling poet. One stormy night during his lean years he was waiting for the southbound train at Gardiner. Bailey, the grey-bearded real estate agent, came up to Robinson and said that he loved his poetry. Other people might think that its author dashed it off, but he knew that the poet must have sweat blood over it. Old Bailey of all people! Lovers of great poetry, like great poets, are where you find them! Suddenly it was midsummer again! The rain was no longer wet nor the night cold!

And when Robinson was dying, a young man came to the poet's bedside and said that the older man's reputation does not depend on how often or seldom he published, but rather on the quality of his work. The visitor went on to assert his belief that Robinson had never let a careless line leave his hands. The light that never was on land or sea shone in the face of the dying man. He rejoiced that the young man knew, as he himself knew, that he had never scamped his work. He could die with this satisfaction.

Has Robinson won the permanence for the attic and the crust he endured? He has, we believe. Robert Tristram Coffin, we feel, was not looking far enough ahead when he claimed that our grandchildren will be reading this great poet. Yes, he will live because he looked below the world of change and the externals in the lives of people. His poems have very little local color and definite setting. They have much more permanent human nature. His characters are neither ancient nor modern, neither New Englanders nor New Yorkers. Rather they are man universal. This poet probed deep. His analysis of character is correct and brilliant. His understanding of mankind is shrewd. His insight into the springs of human behavior is penetrating. His work is subtle and original, intellectual and passionate.

The future will study this master craftsman for his superb technique. It will note his lack of ornamentation, artificiality, and poetic diction. Non-essentials are stripped away from his writing. Everything is skinned to the bone. What remarkable condensation! What precision! How tight-packed with thought his sentences! How much he says in a few words! What matchless pen-pictures! He makes a single act reveal a whole life. So deep and loaded with thought are his poems, so difficult to get, that many of them improve with each reading. For instance, "Richard Cory," obviously not one of his major poems, does not improve with several readings, while "The Man Against the Sky," generally considered one of his greatest poems and by some his greatest, certainly does.

Robinson is certainly a somber poet. There is humor in his work, to be sure, but it is not abundant. Greek in type, he is more concerned with tragedy than with comedy. His is a supersensitive spirit brooding over the troubled waters of human life, as it were, and listening to "the still, sad music of mankind." Many of his characters are hurt and frustrated by defeat and grief, and not a few tormented by their own dissipations or crimes. And so he has been called a negativist and a pessimist. The charge is unwarranted. It is just that he saw, as few have, the measureless discrepancy between the lives that men desire and the lives that they live. He saw how tragically many are damaged and denied fulfillment both by their own psychological kinks and by harsh conditions in the world over which they have little or no control. To him many seemed "lost in fortune's winnowing."

As a Harvard student the poet told his inner circle of friends that life is a terrible business, and he never could get entirely away from this feeling. His own misfortunes and frustrations and those he saw in other lives would not let him. Many were unequal to life's demands, he saw, because within them and without there was so much against them and because they were striving in the wrong ways. But he refused to believe that the "world is a prison house." Rather he thought it "a kind of spiritual kindergarten where millions of bewildered infants are trying to spell God with the wrong blocks." And so he wrote about earth's frail children never with harshness and bitterness but always with compassion. Amid their spiritual maladies and complexities he saw a grandeur in men. Despite man's

weakness he believed in man's intrinsic greatness. There was a divine quality and a demand for life in man, this poet affirmed, that would never let him surrender belief and hope altogether even though his way might be enshrouded with mist. Light was a favorite figure with Robinson. And always, even though baffled often, he sought light for himself and for his fellows. Follow the gleam, he urged, even when the gleam is faint. Life is a game, he said, and he charged himself and others to play it according to the rules. He judged men more by their striving than by their arriving. Courage and continual on-going win success out of failure. Continually he searched for order and meaning at the heart of what seemed to be often an inscrutable universe. And the universe, even with many of its mysteries hidden, and life's richest satisfactions, he believed, belonged to those who live bravely and not to those who cowardly retreat to some ivory tower.

This poet, who had, as Robert Frost once put it, "a grazing closeness to the spiritual realities," struck out hard against a materialistic explanation of the universe. Life is not a material phenomenon, he strongly asserted. Indeed, he hated materialism in all its forms. He vigorously protested the materialistic standards by which the world judged men and success and failure. And he had a burning hatred for falsehood, hypocrisy, and show. Never was there a more sincere seeker for the eternal strength of things. Nothing would do for him but bedrock fundamentals. Always his aim was directed straight at the starkness of absolute truth.

We admire this sincere and courageous poet who would not blink his eyes at the realities. We admire him for his humility amid the mysteries and perplexities of life and for his frank admission that often his light was dim and inadequate. And because we admire him for these traits of character, we admire him still more for his eager and continuous searching for light.

Rethinking Christianity

KARL M. CHWOROWSKY

To rethink Christianity in terms bold and brave enough to meet the stark imperatives of our days is the supreme task facing Christian people everywhere; and it is a difficult task, for religious people generally and Christian folks in particular are prone to leave their religion to the heart and to bother little about the head, to look upon religion as a great emotional experience and to forget that it must also be an exercise in mental discipline and a commitment to clear thinking and reasonable judgment.

Most Christian people are quite satisfied to leave the thinking about their religion to their priests and pastors, to their teachers and theologians, and of many ministers it must regretfully be said that after they have written their divinity theses and completed their examinations for ordination they are quite satisfied to devote themselves to parish duties and to leave any further thinking on religious truths and problems to others. The result is always bad. We have, thank God, in every generation bold and original prophets, stern and serious thinkers, courageous and progressive leaders, but when they present us with the results of their rethinking of our faith, the masses either do not understand them or they are too lazy to think with them, since the exercise of reason and logical thinking has been generally discouraged. Any sudden crisis challenging to rethinking and reconsidering the fundamentals of our faith and life meets with either indifference, the inertia of ignorance, or the hostility of prejudice and misunderstanding.

Most of us are quite willing to admit that we must today rethink the very fundamentals involved in such concepts as liberty, justice, equality. We know that within the framework of our complicated modern society these concepts call again and again for revision, for elaboration, for interpretation and clarifications; yet, when we face the religious challenge of the hour, as we do now, we are reluctant and unwilling to subject religious thinking to the same tests that we apply to our political, economic, educational, and social thinking. Why? Can it be that we are afraid to think about God? But theology is nothing more than what men, mortal, erring men, have thought about God. Are we afraid to think about the good life? But ethics and morality are impossible without man's devotion to an intelligent and rational pursuit of the good in terms of social living. Are we afraid to think about Brotherhood? But this term has its origins not only in some vague feeling of kinship for those of our human kind but is fundamentally the truth about "community" and "fellowship" arrived at by serious reflection, by thinking upon the blessedness of fellowship, and by rethinking the problems of social living in terms consistent with the changing scenes of history.

Or can it be that, whereas in every other realm of human enterprise we are proud to do bold and creative thinking—as in science, in art, in practical affairs—in the realm of religion we suddenly fear the results that may attend upon fearless and creative use of our intelligence and reason? It is not too harsh a criticism to say that even in this so-called advanced age of ours most religious people are quite willing to let others do their religious thinking for them.

If it is true that religion will have a tremendous role to play in the post-war world, it is equally true that such a role will not be played by an unthinking, unreflective, uncritical, irrational religion. The same people now painfully aware of the necessity to rethink such fundamentals of our life as freedom and democracy, must become equally aware of the necessity to rethink their faith in terms designed to meet the new problems and duties with which the post-war world will confront them. This realization of the necessity to rethink what we believe and what our hearts hold most dear, is really nothing new in the history of religion. At every period of crisis we have had great souls appear whose special function and mission it was to reinterpret for us the religious truths we had taken for granted, to rethink for and with us those fundamental concepts of truth, goodness, and beauty that we associate with the revealing grace of God. The tragedy of these radiant figures of religious history has been that they for a moment dazzled and intoxicated their contemporaries, but only for a moment, for the masses of people soon proved too indolent and timorous to follow the "new revelation," whose newness consisted simply in shedding the light of new experience upon ancient truths and in bringing

the creative touch of a vital imagination to bear upon new problems and tasks.

Unless we are today willing to assume this responsibility of rethinking our religion, we may be sure that its role in the tremendous period of post-war reconstruction will be pitifully inadequate, if not completely nil. This process of rethinking Christianity must begin now, it must shape its tools of thought and organize its forces for implementation amid the very agonies of a world being reborn. These are just a few of the areas in which we must do the most serious and consecrated rethinking of our faith:

(1) We must rethink the place of religion in life. Although it is so obviously true that much of our present trouble is due to our stupid habit of confining religion to a special compartment of our existence, reserving it for special places, seasons, and occasions, we still hold with a childish stubbornness to the ancient superstition that religious worship and religious exercise must be confined to churches and like buildings, that religious ideals can find expression only in theological sophistication and ecclesiastical speculation, that creed and dogma are fundamental, and that rite and sacrament are vital aspects of the religious life.

This truth is obvious: unless and until religion is taken into the everyday arena of life, unless and until it is made a force operative in the marts of trade, the courts of law, the halls of governments, unless and until its principles and ideals become the very atmosphere of human existence, religion remains an empty form and a hollow mockery. So far, religious folk have had neither the intelligence nor the courage to take their religion with them six days of the week, making it effective wherever they work or play; so far their religion has proved hopelessly weak and unproductive, since it has been reserved for a few hours of formal exercise under the direction of priest and pastor on some particular days and then is retired as something either too helpless and weak to face the blasts of reality or something too beautifully delicate and dreamlike to be exposed to the cruel world of affairs and conflicting human ambitions. In the new world, religion will have to be a force in direct proportion to the amount of religious consecration and religious idealism men and women are willing to bring to bear upon the progressive solution of the great problems of justice, peace, and cooperative fellowship.

(2) We must rethink the concept of the Fatherhood of God; this is no new concept, but rather a very ancient one. Its long history, however, has not prevented this glorious truth from becoming overlaid with strange superstitions and half-truths. Christian people still think that the Fatherhood of God is a particular monopoly of their faith; they look upon their particular theological formulation of this great concept as the only logical and ethically satisfying one. From this error it follows that the inclusiveness and catholicity of this concept are sacrificed to a parochialism and insularity of outlook completely out of harmony with the spirit and essence of this truth. We shall be able to build a new world only upon the basis of a comprehensive and all-inclusive faith in the Fatherhood of God; anything short of that will prove heresy and error of the costliest sort.

(3) We must rethink our idea of the Brotherhood of Man; what strange fancies and fantastic vagaries of thought and idea we have woven around this majestic revelation of the Eternal. Two thousand years after His voice has been stilled, the voice that declared God's love for all men and declared all men children of the Eternal, we, boasting the name Christian, still apply the tag "inferior" to those of darker skins; or we designate as "lost and erring" those whose formulations of doctrine and whose rites of worship happen to differ from ours; despite the fact that Jesus himself declared that obedience to the Great Commandment was the only requirement for salvation, despite the fact that the gospel of the Nazarene was simply a reiteration of Micah's word regarding mercy, justice, and humility.

Here is the challenge to rethink Christianity. We need sacrifice nothing of the wealth of tradition and custom with which our worship has been enriched throughout the centuries; nobody need fear that his particular form of service and devotion will be tampered with in such a process of rethinking. What I am demanding is simply this, that again the spirit of our faith assert itself in those vital and energizing forms that characterized it in those days when men and women were willing to lay down their lives for those eternal truths without which man cannot live as man. Rethinking Christianity means primarily re-emphasizing its primary truths and giving the proper place to its secondary expressions; it means making creative faith more important than purely speculative theology; it means elevating ethical thinking and moral inspiration above metaphysical philosophizing and abstruse shadow-boxing; it means putting thought to work upon the stern realities of everyday human existence, making men think hard and earnestly about their duties to their fellow man, about the widest reaches of human affection and interest, about the rock-bottom reality that resides in such terms as brotherhood, mutuality, equality, justice, and peace.

There is much rethinking going on these days. Are the churches to leave this rethinking to the secular forces of life? Then they need not be surprised if religion, if the church, is left holding the bag. But we still have the faith, we still have the courage, we still have the hope—have we not?—to walk the way the Master walked. He was a doer as well as a thinker, and his words "Go and do thou likewise" were meant not for the thoughtless doer but for the man who in every changed circumstance of life finds a challenge to rethink his position, to rethink his Master's example, to rethink God's thoughts, and then to act in good faith upon the new knowledge and insights he has won. This way lies our road for tomorrow. Will we take it?

Land Lines Fade

Diplomacy is still concerned with lines
Upon the checkered squares of broken ground;
The new world flies and is no longer bound
By feudal footmen's weathered fighting signs.
Above the slow-waved sea of silver clouds,
The new world rises to a cleaner air;
Our men have seen the upper sky grow fair
And will not bow to merchant men of shrouds.

Migrating words of peace may lose their ways
Like birds of autumn over stranger seas,
Led off by some distorted, man-made rays,
But flying man is safer now than these.
The new world melts in unity of sun,
There is no stopping where the land lines run.

MANFRED A. CARTER.

Toward Civilized Weddings

PHILIP SCHUG

One of the places where the church of today is most out of step with the thought of intelligent and educated people is in the services that it uses for the most meaningful occasions in life. It is little wonder that many thoughtful people prefer to be married by a justice and buried by lodge brothers or sisters.

Sometime ago a young couple came to me and asked whether I would help them find a civilized marriage service. They were to be married by a liberal minister who was a close relative, but they could not agree to the services that his church supplied. The services had too much hocus-pocus in them. They were otherworldly and tended to assume that marriages are made in "heaven." They called upon the "deities" to guarantee the union, but there was the implied threat that if things went awry these same "deities" would transfer the blame to the couple and act as prosecutors, judges, and executioners. The mood just did not fit modern thinking.

They wanted, in short, a modern marriage service that considered marriage as a meaningful human institution to be entered into by ordinary human beings with high hopes, some failings and some fears. They considered themselves responsible people, and they did not want to be treated as children. They were determined to do their best, they knew there were risks involved, and they did not want to be threatened or have something put over on them. The minister who was to read the service had agreed that he would read any respectable service that they could find to suit their needs.

Within a few moments we were oriented in the problem that faced them, and I secured the service that I prefer to use in the event that the couple to be married do not choose to sit down with me and work out their own service. We worked over several poetic selections that would serve as fitting introductions to the service, and chose one from the writings of Kahlil Gibran. Because so many people face this same problem I am here reproducing the service that was used by this couple—a service originally compiled by Curtis W. Reese and approved by the Unitarian and Universalist Commissions on Hymns and Services for inclusion in the Minister's Handbook.

The minister reads:

Love one another, but make not a bond of love;
Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls.
Fill each other's cup but drink not from one cup,
Give one another of your bread but eat not from the same loaf.
Sing and dance together and be joyous, but let each one of you be alone,
Even as the strings of a lute are alone though they quiver with the same music.
Give your hearts, but not into each other's keeping,
For only the hand of Life can contain your hearts,
And stand together yet not too near together;
For the pillars of the temple stand apart,
And the oak tree and the cypress grow not in each other's shadow.
But let there be spaces in your togetherness,
And let the winds of the heavens dance between you.
Love one another, but make not a bond of love.
—(*Kahlil Gibran.*)

The minister then says to the assembled group:

We are gathered together to unite this man and this woman in marriage, which is an institution founded in nature, ordained by the state, sanctioned by the church, and made honorable by the faithful keeping of good men and women in all ages. It is, therefore, not by any to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but discreetly, advisedly, and with due reverence. This celebration is the outward token of a sacred and inward union of hearts, which the church may bless and the state make legal, but which neither state nor church can create or annul, a union created by loving purpose and kept by abiding will. Into this estate these two persons come to be united.

The minister addresses bride and groom:

Is it in this spirit and for this purpose that you have come hither to be joined together?

Reply:

It is.

The minister then has the bride and groom join right hands and says:

Do you M..... take N.....to be your wife, to love and to cherish, to honor and to comfort, in sickness or in health, in sorrow or in joy, in hardship or in ease, to have and to hold, from this day forth?

The groom replies:

I do.

This is then repeated for the bride with proper substitution of words, and the bride replies:

I do.

The minister then instructs the groom to place ring upon bride's finger and to repeat:

With this ring I wed you, and pledge my faithful love.

(In double ring ceremony, repeat for bride. If no rings are used omit this.)

The minister then says to the assembled company:

Forasmuch as M..... and N..... have thus pledged themselves each to the other in the presence of this company I do now, by virtue of authority vested in me by the State of ....., pronounce that they are husband and wife.

Addressing the married couple the minister says:

May all that is noble, lovely, and true abide with you forever.

Not only is this service a thing of beauty, but it can be entered into by the most enlightened people with a frankness and honesty that is now seldom found in religious circles. Honesty and integrity do not have to be parked on the doorstep while the couple and the assembled group suffer through a service that is deemed socially necessary but is as barbarous as the Middle Ages.

The service should not be spoiled by an insistence upon the formality of giving the bride away. There is no reason why the father, mother, or any other person may not be in the procession with the bride if it is desired, though there can hardly be a good reason for considering it necessary, but the idea that the bride must be given away by some male guardian stems from the ages when cows, chickens, slaves, and women were chattel. In an enlightened world women are the equals and partners of men. They do not need male guardians from the cradle to the grave. If they are intelligent and aggressive enough to get their men they have no good reason to revert to the barbarity and incongruity of being passed from one master to another.

Marriage is far too fundamental an institution to be entered upon amid a sea of mysterious hocus-pocus. Young people—and their parents—have a right to demand an honest, intelligible service that fits a modern world. It is perhaps best to sit down and work it out together. The next best is to use the above or some variation of it.

Correspondence

In Reply to Mr. Opitz

To UNITY:

I have read Mr. Opitz' "spanking" letter with due humility and some amusement. He must be a very sensitive chap to take my strong arraignment of what actually, "scientifically" and morally amounts to "stupidity, hypocrisy" and so forth, in much of the white man's attitude on intermarriage for "smear;" but, then, that is his privilege of interpretation.

I disagree with him, among other details of his hardly "reasonable" criticism of the "tone" of my article, as to (1) his statement that I am "such a marvelous piano player," which is a statement contrary to fact and simply proves that Mr. Opitz either has never heard me play or that his musical ear is seriously at fault; (2) that he is spokesman for "fifty million other guys named Joe." Make it two hundred fifty million, and if there were a consensus of opinion as to Mr. Opitz' point of view against intermarriage among ten times that number I would still write as I did against that consensus and probably find even stronger words to condemn those who denounce intermarriage between white and black (or any other color) on the basis of some pseudo-scientific theory which holds that color, hair, skull formation, and so forth, marks one group of people as "inferior" from another and therefore makes marriage with them a "crime against the better blood," as Hitler would call it. That was the burden of my article, and if Mr. Opitz is for that sort of attitude towards intermarriage, well and good, I still "don't like it."

KARL M. CHWOROWSKY.

Brooklyn, New York.

Miss Wentworth Replies to the Editor

To UNITY:

The article by Dr. Reese in UNITY for July contains what seem to me to be glaring contradictions. It is consistent and on a high, progressive plane up to the paragraph which calls for "such physical strength on the land, on the sea, and in the air that no power and no combination of powers can successfully challenge us in our role as master builder of world democracy," which suddenly plunges the reader into the thinking of the past—the destructive thinking which has brought the world into its present foul slough of despond.

The arguments given to uphold that opinion are far from convincing. For one thing, the meaning of democracy in its true sense, the sense in which Dr. Reese uses it elsewhere, is not compatible with the support of such warring establishments as he demands. For another thing, no amount of military power and armament has ever led to peace or can ever lead to it. On the contrary, any such concentration of physical power would announce our superiority to the rest of the world in a way that would be a threat to peace, would spread terror and suspicion throughout the world and incite other powerful nations to build up their military strength; and that could hardly fail to lead straight to war. The only other nation which could possibly equal ours in military power is Russia, and "conflict between these two great centers of power can be avoided" according to Dr. Reese; but certainly not if we flaunt ever-increasing military strength in Russia's face.

Democracy can never be forced upon other nations. We can never become a "master builder of world democracy" by a show of physical force. That would only defeat the spirit of democracy. True democracy requires manifestation of both good will and brotherhood each of which Dr. Reese knows to be essential to world peace and each of which is antagonized and outraged by a show of physical force.

To attempt to awe the world by a colossal military force is not the way to inculcate a spirit of good will and brotherhood. It is not the way to expand "national patriotism into world patriotism." It is not the way to "educate for effective administration for democratic ends." It is absolutely opposed to a policy of "the education and discipline of our finest minds in the knowledge of world affairs and in the principles of effective administration to equip them for careers in democratic world statesmanship." No amount of fair words and education in principles can offset the effect of a demonstration of the power to conquer and subdue.

From my point of view the maintenance of so extensive and powerful a military force would of necessity increase the demand for military training and thus vastly increase the spirit of militarism among our people, and in consequence would give the military forces a power which it would be hopeless to try to resist. Hence civilian-mindedness, "one of our precious heritages" would retreat before un-American military domination of our people. It is the dominating, aggressive spirit fostered by militarism which has kept the world enslaved, and the immense force demanded in that article would only continue and increase that spirit.

The role of America as a leader in world affairs, as marked out by Dr. Reese, is not too ambitious. Our country can and should lead, but not by a display of colossal power, since the desire to retaliate in kind, which such power would create, would be more than likely to bring about the formation of a bloc of nations arrayed against our arrogantly superior might. Moreover, it seems to me that the idea of forces so huge that "no combination of powers can successfully challenge us" is not only unreasonable but impossible to achieve; and if it were possible the initial cost and upkeep would come close to impoverishing our people and keeping them impoverished.

Our country can rightfully assume "the role of master builder in world democracy" when we can demonstrate to all what true democracy is. To be a builder of world democracy will take infinite patience on our part, combined with good will and an unfailing spirit of brotherhood, to convince other nations that democracy is best for them. Meanwhile, we can prepare the ground for true democracy by untiring effort to rid ourselves and the rest of the world of every trace of militarism. Until militarism and all that pertains to it are abolished there will be no solid foundation on which to build a democratic world.

LYDIA G. WENTWORTH.

Brookline, Massachusetts.

Weight of Testimony

To UNITY:

I have just been reading Victor S. Yarros' article, "Curious Arguments for Immortality," as published in your August issue. Mr. Yarros finds it curious that the arguments for immortality advanced by certain distinguished scholars and thinkers are so "inconclusive, woefully inadequate, astonishingly weak and superficial." May I respond that I find it curious that Mr. Yarros should be thus impressed by testimony advanced by such notable minds as L. P. Jacks, Paul Elmer More, William E. Hocking, Ralph Barton Perry, and J. P. Williams. With all due respect to Mr Yarros, for whom I have sincere admiration, one is tempted to ask: Who is he to sit in judgment on such men as these to whom he refers? Is such consensus of opinion to be taken thus lightly and scornfully?

Weight of testimony is not necessarily final. But it surely means something, indeed much, in the quest of truth, when the best minds through the ages past have found reason for faith in the reality of the immortal life. I am reminded of a notable statement by James Martineau in his *Endeavors After the Christian Life.* If immortality is a delusion, says Martineau, then "we know who are those who are mistaken . . . the deceived are the great and holy. . . . Whom are we to reverence, and what can we believe, if the inspirations of the highest natures are but cunningly devised fables."

JOHN HAYNES HOLMES.

New York City, New York.

Vista Ahead

Established sounds of peace are sweet to hear,
The muted plodding of the milkman's horse;
Yet now uncertain rumblings waken fear,
We must not turn from our mapped, charted course
Past rugged rocks to peace. The way ahead
Is thick with pitfalls . . . yet bright vistas gleam
When we have crawled or walked. The valiant dead
Shout, "Clouds ahead; keep eyes upon the beam."

This sorrow chastened world still understands
Unselfishness, equality, fair play.
The world needs homes and bread and tranquil lands;
Paul taught of Christ yet trod the Appian Way.
So may we comprehend roads built for wars
Can traffic peace through high and bloodless doors.

ZELLA WALLACE.

Western Conference News

RANDALL S. HILTON, Executive Secretary
700 Oakwood Boulevard, Chicago 15, Illinois

BOARD MEETING

The Board of Directors of the Western Unitarian Conference met in Chicago, Monday, September 30. Among other items of business it heard the initial report of the By-Laws Revision Committee. This committee was authorized by the conference at the annual meeting held in Denver last May. The committee consists of Charles E. Snyder, Chairman; Raymond B. Bragg, Randall S. Hilton, Delta I. Jarrett, Tracy M. Pullman, and Curtis W. Reese, ex-officio.

MR. HILTON'S VISITS

Sept. 8—Hinsdale: Sunday service.
Sept. 8—Bloomington: Conference with Mr. Walker.
Sept. 12—Alton: Visit with Mr. Gill.
Sept. 13—Shelbyville: Jordan Church.
Sept. 15—Sioux City: Sunday service and Pulpit Committee meeting.
Sept. 22—Cincinnati, St. John's: Sunday service.
Sept. 30—Board Meeting.
Oct. 2-3—Wilmington, Delaware: Joseph Priestly Conference.
Oct. 4-6—New York: Visit at Headquarters.
Oct. 7-11—Boston: A.U.A. Committees and Board Meetings.
Oct. 21-23—Sioux City: Iowa Conference.
Oct. 25—Beverly-Chicago: Borgford Installation.
Oct. 27—Ann Arbor: First Unitarian Church.

MEN AND PLACES

Leon Land has begun his pastorate at Flint. . . People's Liberal Church, Chicago, has called William Hammond to be its minister. . . Robert Hoagland has accepted the pastorate of the Schenectady church. . . Laurance Plank is taking another year off to continue his writing. . . Kenneth Patton had two books come off the press during the same week in August: *Strange Seed,* a volume of poems, and *Beyond Doubt,* a readable and practical presentation of naturalistic religion. . . Robert M. Pratt, minister at Quincy, Illinois, preached at the Community Church on Catalina Island this past summer. . . George G. Davis, Director of the Department of Extension and Church Maintenance of the A.U.A., has returned to his office. During his illness, Lon Ray Call was acting director. . . Howard Brooks is now Director of the Unitarian Service Committee, succeeding Dr. Charles Joy who resigned during the summer. . . Dr. Norton J. Hilton, father of the Secretary of the Conference, died on July 7. . . W. A. Hambley, of Milwaukee, was elected chairman of the Mid-West Laymen's League at the Geneva Conference. Evelyn Hambley, his daughter, was elected chairman of the Mid-West A.U.Y. . . Francis Ruland, formerly minister of the church in Sioux City, is now minister of the Unitarian Church in Newburgh, New York.

JACK MENDELSOHN SAYS:

Wherever and however else we may spend our talents in the coming year, we must confront the bedrock issue of life in a world that is rushing with headlong ferocity toward the brink of chaos. What is to be the role of our church at such a time as this? The psychological pressures upon all of us, whether we consciously realize it or not, are giving rise to almost universal problem behavior. . .

My understanding of all this is that essentially our problem is a spiritual one. We live in a morally afflicted world which poses for us the immediate imperative: *Either you must run for cover, or you must go forward!* We have before us the choice of a new Dark Ages, or a long, hard climb to new heights of human understanding and achievement.

There is no question which of those two alternatives we, as a Unitarian group, must choose. Ours is the church that believes in human progress and trusts the ultimate competence of man. While virtually every other religious institution in the world is inviting harried mankind to give up the spiritual fight and take refuge, we must continue to be the gadfly, urging men on, laying bare the human conscience, injecting the adrenalin of conviction, courage, and determination.

I grant you for the moment, at least, that the odds are against us, but for you and me there can be no other way. We are allergic to medievalism now and always. Let us treat carefully, then, our responsibilities toward one another in the year ahead.

HAVE YOU READ THESE?

"Reading maketh a full man."—Bacon

If Thought Be Free, E. Burdette Backus—$1.00.
Faith of an Unrepentant Liberal, A. Powell Davies—$1.00.
Humanism States Its Case, J. A. C. F. Auer—$1.00.
The Meaning of Humanism, C. W. Reese—$1.00
Beyond Doubt, Kenneth L. Patton—$2.50.
Strange Seed, Kenneth L. Patton—$1.50.
Hello, Man, Kenneth L. Patton—$1.00.
Peace of Mind, Joshua L. Liebman—$2.50.

Order these and all Beacon Press publications through the Western Unitarian Conference Book Department.

THE GENEVA CONFERENCE

Nearly four hundred adults, young people, and children attended the Geneva Summer Assembly at College Camp, Wisconsin, August 18-25. It was an exciting, inspiring, and constructive conference. Verbal and written statements have been coming to the Dean ever since those dates, expressing appreciation for the values and benefits gained both by individuals and by churches as a result of the full and stimulating program. The faculty was excellent and the participation exceptional. The laymen at the Conference have undertaken the publicity and promotion of next year's session. It is their goal to pass the 500 mark in attendance.

Churchmanship Workshop—Bloomington, Illinois.
November 23-24, 1946.